Bringing Back the K

I. Introduction

A. Good Kritik Debate is a Lost Art

1. Lost Paradigms

a. Judges used to be very tab, but now they have very specific biases.

B. Rise of the A Prioris

C. Fall of the A Prioris

D. Lack of Creativity

1. Same old kritiks are getting old.

E. Skepticism about Skepticism

F. Lack of Understanding about Kritiks

1. At the crossroads of LD Debate, what is the future of the activity? How does LD differ from policy? We ought to value Value Debate.

2. “Transcendental Deconstruction / Justice”

G. Definitions

1. Kritiks – challenge assumptions or arguments of an opponent’s advocacy.

2. Kritiks – linear disadvantages to your opponent’s advocacy.

H. Carpe Diem

1. Many debaters from last year were K debaters, so there’s a void.

2. Many first-year-out judges are familiar with the K’s, forming a good judging pool.

3. Element of Surprise.

4. Judges want to see someone and something unique.

I. If I want to beat kritiks, I should gain some experience running them.

J. Running a kritik gives you more prep-time for the 2NR.

II. Know the Game Like You’re Reffin’ It

A. Adapt to the Judge

1. Do not run kritiks if judges hold the arguments to a higher standard than normal positions.

2. If a judge wants to build a rep as tab, you can take advantage of judges and win with a kritik.

B. Adapt to the Opponent

1. You should institute a personal challenge to not let other people be better at K’s than you.

2. Know your opponent’s comfort zone.

C. Adapt to the Round

1. A kritik will knock a nervous opponent off the ledge.

2. Panels magnify the insecurity of judges.

D. Platinum Rule of Kritiks

1. Decide whether there’s a strong link to the kritik within one minute of the AC.

III. Types of Kritiks

A. Systems of Thought Kritiks

1. Different schools of though that often times are the best types of kritiks because they have the most tangible impacts.

2. These kritiks are susceptible to being non-unique.

B. Language Kritiks

1. Based simply on the way we talk about things

2. Post-fiat

a. Bad effect after implementation

3. Pre-fiat

a. The framing of an argument is problematic

4. Often have the clearest link

5. Punishment Paradigm

a. Judges should punish debaters for uneducational or bad behavior.

C. Ethical Imperative Kritiks

1. Alternative is usually just rejection.

a. Impact must include reasons why rejection is good.

IV. Form of the Links

A. Dive Deep.

1. Do back-research. Read a kritik book every month to keep ideas flowing.

2. Do front-research for common terms in Affirmative cases AND kritikal ideas.

3. Use Project MUSE for topical links in postmodern culture studies and literature.

B. Bottom Up versus Top Down

1. Bottom up means generating link ideas from case research.

a. Prevents card shortages

b. Increases topical relevance

2. Top down means thinking up a kritikal idea on your own.

C. Size Does Matter

1. The size of the link determines the size of the impact.

a. Read one more link than you think you need.

b. Each link should have multiple references to how the AC bites into the implications of the kritik.

D. Carded Links are Crucial

1. Don’t rely on your analytics to link your opponent’s practices into the kritik.

E. Have a flexible link strategy.

1. The strategy should depend on the Affirmative’s arguments.

2. Pre-empt the link turn with your link’s analysis.

V. The Harms

A. Tell a story.

1. Add internal links to the terminal impact.

2. Don’t be afraid to go further.

3. You need a coherent positional approach.

B. Big impacts.

1. Huge harms are the only way to outweigh huge arguments on the AC that were dropped.

2. Weak and honest impacts are vulnerable to impact turns.

a. Sometimes good because can lure them into a double-turn.

3. Weak impacts are the only way to lose the harms section.

4. Pre-empt the tangible approach and body-count strategy by having impacts that implicate a body count.

5. Don’t claim that your impact cards say something huge is happening if they don’t say that.

VI. The Alternative

A. The Alternative essentially is a counterplan.

1. You need a text.

a. Make the text long, and include relevant information.

b. Text should correspond to a solvency advocate who claims that your alternative solves for impacts.

2. You need competition.

a. Best answer to a kritik is always a permutation, so prepare answers.

i. Voting Affirmative taints the urgency of the kritik and tank the questioning process, so impacts will still exist.

ii. Use of fiat to do the Alternative plan is inconsistent with the kritik because the kritik doesn’t support policy-making-roleplaying.

iii. If Affirmative mindset is harmful, then Affirmative loses. Kritiking is a subset of competing interpretations.

iv. Run theory that severance permutations are bad because Affirmative is shifting out of links to their advocacy.

v. Link Affirmative into an argument about outweighing on timeframe if Affirmative wants to rethink.

vi. Add a statement that indicates that political action is at odds with the Affirmative advocacy. Have a card from a solvency advocate who says that you cannot do both.

3. Treat the Alternative as a counterplan.

a. You must solve for the kritik’s harms or there is no uniqueness.

b. You should solve for the AC harms as well to steal their ground.

c. Claim 100% solvency for the Affirmative’s harms.

B. What makes a good alternative?

1. Policy solvent alternatives

a. Solves and competes like a counterplan, making the AC irrelevant.

b. Argue that the implications of your kritik make your alternative the best course of action.

2. Judge should endorse Negative’s kritiking rather than looking for a policy alternative. (Lain, Brian)

3. Rethink alternatives

a. Can Affirm while rethinking

b. Very little nuance to the argument

4. Micropolitical alternatives

a. Gordon Mitchell wrote an article about reflexive fiat and contest strategy in debate. *Pedagogical Policies*.

b. Disengaged spectator mentality

i. As a way that we debate, we are often disengaged from the problem we’re discussing. We fetishize arguments in a form of disaster form because of the weighing.

c. Advocate an Alternative that makes you the agent who is committed to the Alternative and truly engaging in debate’s essence.

i. Allows to claim reflexive fiat.

ii. Clarifies the actor.

iii. Explains the ballot’s role in the debate.

iv. Don’t be discouraged by a response-dump.

5. Rejection Alternative.

a. Vote down a debater for his evil advocacy.

6. Kritiking on the Aff is definitely possible with this resolution.

VII. In-Round Tips

A. Get the pressure points and build links

B. Identify statements that make your impacts relevant

C. Frame your arguments in the broader paradigm that you’re criticizing.

D. Do not rest your links on cross-examination’s yes-no questions.

E. Play slow-pitch softball so that they don’t realize you’re kritiking.

F. Put them on the defensive.

1. Ask them why.

G. How to add three minutes to the NC to a ten minute length.

1. Point out fundamental misunderstanding of the kritik.

2. Use other examples and authors to make the links, harms, and impacts even more precise.

H. Selling your extensions.

1. Start with an overview on your own position.

a. Go through the link-story and weave in the impacts and your solvency.

b. Point out the unique features of your criticism to make their arguments non-responsive.

2. Synthesize, don’t repeat.

a. Use your own rhetoric to clarify the round.

3. Spend 50% more on your kritikal arguments than you would on a normal position.

4. Extend the argument when it answers your opponent’s responses.

5. React to your judge’s facial expressions to get a sense of how you must improve.

6. Relink your opponent to the kritik.

VIII. How to Bring the K

A. Kill the buzzwords. Don’t use words that generate many biases.

B. Crush the 1AR BS.

1. No standard.

a. Gain offense against the AC’s standard. Either link into theirs or say they link into yours.

b. There is no explicit criterion in any scholarly writing. There’s no reason why we must evaluate arguments with a criterion.

c. If they extend the standard, they lose the permutation.

2. No ballot story.

a. Frame it as a DA or CP. The Alternative is the ballot story.

IX. Conclusion

A. Kritik is the fastest way to gain a reputation and out-tech your opponent. Kritiks allow you to adapt and persuade, while also surprising your opponents.